

fchose gardens, on more than one day of mad riot, the joy with which at last they possessed the gate of their enemies.

Of the monasteries in the North of England, it is probable that most of this would be untrue. In the solitary vales of Yorkshire, the popularity of the great sheep-farming abbeys was natural and right. No town stood under the walls of Bolton or Bivaulx, and the inmates seem to have been popular with the peasantry, if we are to judge from the revolt that broke out when they were abolished by Henry the Eighth. But we know little or nothing of the North Country in Chaucer's day, except that the devil was supposed by Southerners to come from that part of the world.¹ It may well be that in districts where society still recalled certain aspects of the twelfth century, the monasteries still resembled the monasteries of that bygone period in their serviceableness to man. But the manner in which the Southern counties rallied to the defence of the government that dissolved the abbeys, was no less remarkable than the rising of Lincolnshire and the North to overthrow it. Henry the Eighth had no regular army. He was saved by the willing help of the richer and more advanced part of his subjects.

We have now completed a brief sketch of the principal sections of English churchmen. Formidable separately, the prestige that each derived from membership of the Catholic Church, the support that in the hour of real danger they afforded one another, rendered it impossible to reduce the power of any of these sections, until the laity were in a position to assert their mastery over all. The weapon of the clergy in every quarrel was excommunication. They used it freely to defend their privileges. It was a recognised law that invaders of the goods and liberties of the Church were to be cursed.² Wycliffe, with his exalted notions of the purely spiritual position that the clergy ought to occupy, thought it wrong in them to call down the solemn curse of God for such mundane purposes.³ But many may think that it was a fair

¹ *Friar's Tale*, Chaucer lines 113-4.

² Gibson, ii. 1099-1100; *S. E. W.*, iii.

³ 268.

[†] *De Dom. Civ.*, 277-8 ; *Fasc. Z.*, 251-2; *De -27cc.*, 156.